WHY WAS I SENT TO THIS SCHOOL?

THIS PLACE SEEMS TO BE FULL OF LIES.

# Report.13 Keep Your Feet on the Ground

DON'T WORRY.
THE SCHOOL DOCTOR SAYS HE JUST PASSED OUT.
Nurse's Office
J- JUST LEAVE IT TO ME.
HOPE YOU WILL TAKE CARE OF TAKUMA, SENSEI!
ALL OF US IN THE BASKETBALL CLUB
YOU HAVE TO KEEP QUIET.
YOU CAN GO BACK TO YOUR DORMS NOW.
1!
2!
1!
2!
quickly.
march
march
LET'S DEDICATE THIS RUN TO TAKUMA'S FATE!
COME ON, BASKET-BALL CLUB!
お!
YEAH!

Ninja Club
.....
WHEN...
WILL YUUICHI COME BACK?
HUH? KOTAROU, YOUR ENTIRE CLUB JUST LEFT..
Basketball Club
I THINK HE'LL BE BACK IN YOUR ROOM BEFORE THE DAY IS OUT
DIDN'T I TELL YOU? WHEN THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH A HUMAN, A SPECIALIST CALLED A DOCTOR WILL SET THINGS RIGHT.
DIDN'T A DOCTOR TREAT YOU WHEN YOU GOT HURT BEFORE?
THIS WON'T TAKE LONG. JUST GO BACK TO YOUR ROOM.

LIKE I SAID,
IT WAS MY FAULT.
WHY...
WHY? UH...
DID YUICHI PASS OUT?
IF ONLY...
I HADN'T RACED HIM FOR KICKS...
Pat Pat
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT!
HE WOULDN'T HAVE TRIPPED OVER THE TRASH CAN—
AND FALLEN—

LET'S NOT TALK ABOUT WHAT'S IN THE PAST AGAIN!
I CAUGHT HIM BEFORE HE COULD HIT THE GROUND, RIGHT?
I SWEAR I DID!
SENSEI, CAN I WAIT FOR HIM HERE?
SURE, IF YOU PROMISE TO KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN
WATANUKI-SENSEI, CAN I STAY HERE, TOO?
I FEEL RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS INCIDENT. I SHOULD HAVE BEEN MORE ATTENTIVE.
AH! ME, TOO!
ALL RIGHT! HOW ABOUT WE ALL WAIT HERE...

...UNTIL THE FOX BOY WAKES UP?
IT'S...
NOT THAT LATE, IS IT?
SO DARK...
HAS THE SUN GONE DOWN?

WHEN I LOOKED DOWN FROM THE BALCONY,

IN THAT INSTANT,

I THOUGHT,

"OH...

TAKUMA-KUN IS A..."

MY FEET SEEMED TO HAVE LEFT THE GROUND.

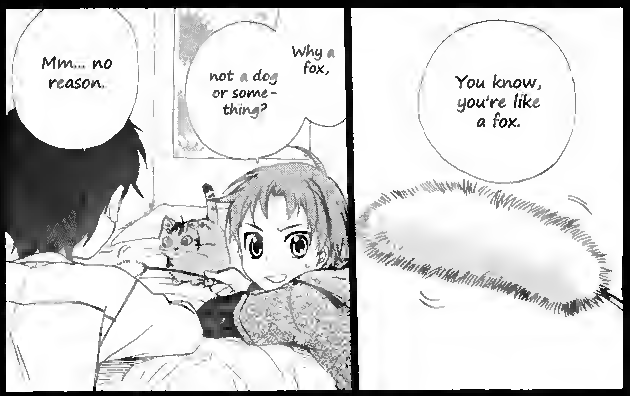
IT'S EARLY EVENING NOW
THIS IS THE SCHOOL HALLWAY
I'M THINKING WEIRD STUFF
WEIRD
BUT THEY ARE.
I CAN'T SEEM TO FEEL MY FEET ON THE GROUND.
stare
じ…
jolt
ビク!

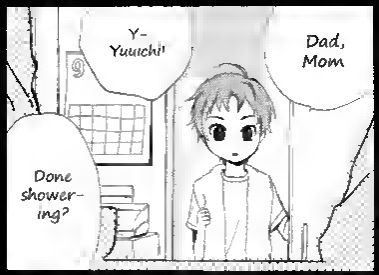
BE-
CAUSE...
IT'S TOO
QUIET.
...ARE YOU
WORRIED
ABOUT ME?
NOTHING.
WHAT IS IT,
MIIKO-SAN?
WE ARE
SITTING IN
FRONT OF
THE NURSE'S
OFFICE
.....
HUH?
I'M
SORRY.
FUKUTA-
SAN...

...I'M SORRY.
DIDN'T YOU SAY YOU LIKE TAKUMA?
SORRY FOR WHAT?
IT'S AS THOUGH...
MY FEET WEREN'T ON THE GROUND...
.....
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, YUUSUKE-KUN.
"AND NOT A DOG OR SOMETHING?"
OR...
MY BODY HAD JUST GROWN LONGER

TAKUMA-KUN...
WAKE UP ALREADY.
COME ON.
HURRY UP.

Honey,
It's about time we told Yuuichi
You're right.
Daddy,
tell me what?
Mommy,
Yuuichi!
Y- you're home!
snap
ぷっつん


Why a fox,
not a dog or something?
Mm... no reason.
You know, you're like a fox.



## ぷっつん, snap

WHAT THE HECK?

WHY DO THEY KEEP CUTTING THEIR CONVERSATIONS SHORT!?

Uh, you see,
Yuuichi, your mother and I have been meaning to tell you this. You have the right to know.
Take this calmly, Yuuichi.
The truth is, your father and I...
...are foxes.
どろん
poof
ぷっつん,
snap

THEY'RE FOXES...
blink
HUH?

Paws——!?
YUUICHI!
EXCUSE US!
TAKUMA!
TAKUMA-KUN!
THANK GOODNESS! YOU'RE ALL RIGHT!
RIGHT, GUYS?

DON'T HOLD A GRUDGE AGAINST ME, 'KAY?

.....
HEY! DON'T JUST DIVE IN!
I TOLD YOU GUYS TO STAY OUTSIDE!
NOW YOU KNOW HE'S OK. SHOO, SHOO.
I NEED TO CHECK UP ON HIM SOME MORE. JUST WAIT OUTSIDE.
PUSH
PUSH
JEEZ, SENSEI! DON'T BE SO UPTIGHT!
KOTAROU,
AM I...
A FOX RIGHT NOW?

YEAH.
?
HEY, YOU
I'M GLAD.
YOU KNOW,
YOU'RE REALLY A FOX

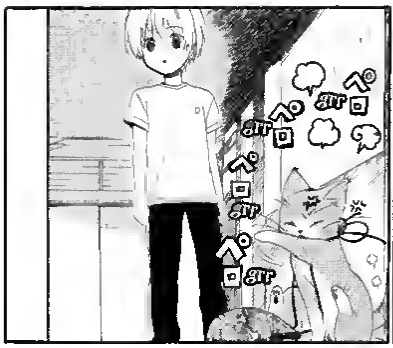
TAKUMA YUUICHI, YOU'RE PROBABLY STILL IN SHOCK
IT WAS SUDDEN, BUT LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE.
THAT WAS A DISASTER, HUH?
YOU'RE NOT THE FIRST STUDENT HERE WHO HAS SHAPESHIFTERS FOR PARENTS AND BELIEVES HIMSELF TO BE A HUMAN.
IN THE LONG RUN, I DON'T THINK THERE COULD HAVE BEEN A BETTER TIME AND PLACE FOR YOU TO CHANGE INTO YOUR TRUE FORM BEFORE YOU GO OUT IN THE HUMAN WORLD.
WE'VE BEEN ASKING YOUR PARENTS FOR THE FULL STORY, FIRSTLY.
THEY DON'T SEEM TO MIND STAYING IN THEIR HUMAN FORMS FOR ALL THEIR LIVES. WE JUST ASKED IF THEY WANTED THE EXISTENCE OF SHAPESHIFTERS TO BE KNOWN, THINGS LIKE THAT.
WE STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT TRIGGERED THE TRANS-FORMATION, THOUGH.

YOU'VE HAD NEIGHBORS WHO ARE GOOD FRIENDS WITH YOUR FAMILY
YOU'VE BEEN IMITATING THEM SINCE YOU WERE A BABY.
.....
I DON'T KNOW... HOW TO TRANS-FORM
YOU USUALLY CHANGE BACK WITHOUT THINKING.
WHEN YOU WAKE UP FROM SLEEP,
IT'S A HABIT LEARNED FROM A YOUNG AGE
I SEE.
I REFUSED TO BELIEVE IT.
FOX.
THE MINUTE MY HEART SEEMED TO SHUT DOWN, I STOPPED BREATHING
BACK THEN, I WAS TIRED FROM ALL THAT RUNNING.
EVERY TIME MY PARENTS TRIED TO BRING IT UP, I WOULD FREEZE.

THIS ISN'T A DREAM, HUH?
.....
A DREAM.
IT'S... LIKE...
.....
step
step
Dismissed!

...NOT HAPPY, FUKUTA-SAN?
YEAH... 'COURSE
HUH?
GOOD THING TAKUMA-KUN IS ALL RIGHT, HUH?
WORRIED ..
I WAS SO WORRIED!
OF COURSE I'M HAPPY! TOTALLY!
LATER
SEE YOU LATER!
RIGHT
I STILL..
FEEL RESTLESS, THOUGH
IT JUST...
IT JUST DOESN'T SEEM REAL
NOPE.

I AM HERE, AREN'T I?
!
Oof!
BUMP
TAKUMA-KUN IS A FOX AND..
WHAT ABOUT ME?
PAT
?
TOUCH
TOUCH
?
?
TOUCH
I'M SORRY.
??
YOU STOPPED IN YOUR TRACKS
?


ペロ
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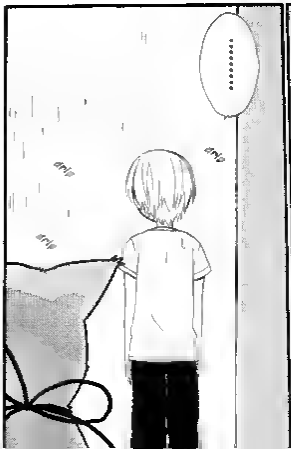
SORRY
はし slap
STOP TOUCHING MY FACE!

plop
plop

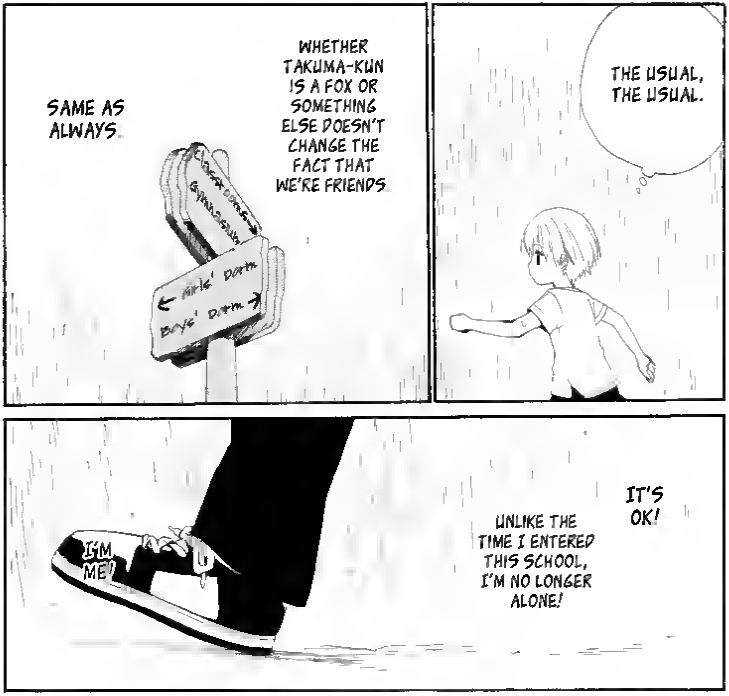

.....
drip
drip
drip

HUP!
はしゃ splash

MIIKO'S WARM.
MEOWWW
YOU'RE WET!
THE RAIN IS WARM
your hand's wet!
FINE!
AH!
I'M JUST GLAD YOU'RE MAD AT ME.
I'M SORRY.
I'M NOT DREAMING, AM I?
WHAT'S THAT?
Paw mark.
TAKUMA-KUN IS DOING ALL RIGHT.
JUST THE USUAL.
Beep!

I'LL SEE TAKUMA-KUN AS USUAL.
WHEN I GO TO SCHOOL TOMORROW,
IF TOMORROW'S A CLEAR DAY, THAT IS
AFTER THAT, I'LL GO TO MY SEAT BY THE WINDOW AND BASK IN THE SUN WITH MIIKO ON MY DESK.
UME-CHAN WILL BE LOOKING AT SOME DESIGN OR READING SOME BOOK IN HER SEAT NEXT TO KOTAKOU, AND I'LL GREET HER "GOOD MORNING."
I'LL TAKE THE LONGER WAY, WHERE IT'S DRY.
COMING, MIIKO?
LET'S TAKE THE SHORTCUT TO OUR DORM!
Splash
Shoo
FLINCH
OK!
Rise

WHEN I'M WET, MY HAIR STICKS AND GETS ALL HEAVY. IT'S UGLY. AND IT GETS IN MY FACE. I HATE THAT.
THAT'S CAUSE
I HATE BATHING.
WE CAN TAKE A WARM BATH LATER.
OH, COME ON! WHY NOT GET WET ONCE IN A WHILE?
YOU'RE A DIFFICULT ONE.
BUT IT'S REFRESHING.
AFTER YOU DRY UP.
MIIKO IS SELFISH.
THOUGH I DON'T KNOW WHAT EXACTLY. ANYWAY, I'M OFF BY MYSELF!
NO HELPING YOU THEN!
GETTING YOURSELF WET WHEN YOU'RE DRY AND THEN DRYING UP? NO POINT.
SEE YOU LATER, MMKAY?


SAME AS ALWAYS.
WHETHER TAKUMA-KUN IS A FOX OR SOMETHING ELSE DOESN'T CHANGE THE FACT THAT WE'RE FRIENDS.
THE USUAL, THE USUAL.
IT'S OK!
UNLIKE THE TIME I ENTERED THIS SCHOOL, I'M NO LONGER ALONE!
I'M ME!

HANG ON!
IT'S OK.
Nurse's offic
IT'S OK!

OH.
AH.
Fluff
UM, I DRENCHED MYSELF IN THE RAIN.
IT FELT GOOD.
YOU'RE THE ONE SOAKING WET, FUKUTA-SAN.
DID YOU GET WET?
.....
OH!! HAVE YOU BEEN WAITING!? SORRY!
FINE...
YEAH?
Dread
TH-THANKS.
Towel
YOU'LL CATCH A COLD.

HANG IN THERE, ME!

# Hakobune Hakusho 13

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